

CREATE AN UNSTOPPABLE SALES MACHINE WITH INBOUND MARKETING AND SEO

MASS ADVERTISING AND THE HARD SELL WON'T CUT IT WITH TODAY'S SAVVY B2B OR B2C AUDIENCE. DISCOVER HOW TO CREATE A FLOOD OF ENGAGED BUYERS BY GIVING THEM WHAT THEY CRAVE MOST



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01 Introduction

Selling products and services has radically changed over the years. At one time marketing was all about mass advertising, finding customers and getting your offer under their noses.

These days the approach is geared more towards letting your customer find you. There has been a movement away from the old outbound methods to a strategy that centres on your customer finding you via conversations about the value you bring them. Welcome to inbound marketing.

Inbound is less about the hard sell and more about building relationships that your prospects and customers value.

For Inbound Marketing to work, you first have to find prospects, or they have to find you. For many companies, SEO (Search Engine Optimization) plays a vital role in helping new customers discover the value they provide.

Quality content such as blog posts, articles and eBooks offer potential customers valuable information without selling them hard. However, they contain a direct call to action that gets them to your website to continue the conversation.



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02 Why content marketing and SEO

75% of all clicks on search engine results pages go to organic results. Organic search engine optimization drives traffic, boosts rankings, and content is what drives SEO.

Content marketing is the foundation of every successful SEO campaign. Getting your website to rank on Google is not about peppering your pages with one or two keywords. Google's algorithms focus on quality content that engages, builds trust, and establishes authority.

Good content marketing strategies are built around these concepts.

Google uses Latent Semantic Indexing (LSI) to determine whether to rank a page for a keyword or not. LSI allows Google to associate related words to a specific topic instead of simply relying on the appearance of specific keywords or phrases.

For example, Google can associate the phrases "golf bags" and "golf equipment" with the main keyword, "golf clubs". Inserting these related keywords in your pages, will make your website more relevant to users and in turn Google will see your website as authoritative and index you appropriately, at the top of the SERP's.

Writing for LSI requires more than just basic keyword research and writing. It requires combining creative writing skills with proven marketing strategies to develop content that impresses human audiences and search engines alike. Being a good writer is not the same as being a good content

marketer. A combination of writing and marketing skills is required to produce quality content for blogs, websites and online campaigns.

03 Inbound Marketing



Inbound Marketing is a proven, content-based marketing strategy for doing business online in our digital age.

By publishing the right content in the right place at the right time, your marketing becomes relevant and helpful to your customers, not interruptive

It's the most effective, scalable and repeatable way of doing business online today. Rather than relying on outbound tactics such as buying ads, buying email lists and email blasts, Inbound Marketing ensures you connect with your target audience in a way that naturally brings them to you.

Most importantly of all, Inbound Marketing results in prospects and customers that want to connect with you, are keen to hear from you and value their relationship with your company and brand.

04 Why you should care

To be successful with an online marketing strategy, simply replicating a traditional offline model doesn't work.

You need to carefully consider how online interactions take place and how best to build assets that leverage the realities of the online market place. You should care.

If you get it wrong, you'll:

- Struggle to attract visitors to your website.
- Not retain their interest once there.
- Convert visitors to leads at a dismal rate.
- Close the sale far less often than you'd like to.
- Maybe not even close the sale at all.

And, you'll be on a continual "merry-go-round" of having to fill your sales funnel with new prospects, only to try and take them through a broken sales process.

You should care because ultimately you'll convert less visitors to prospects, make less sales and make less money.

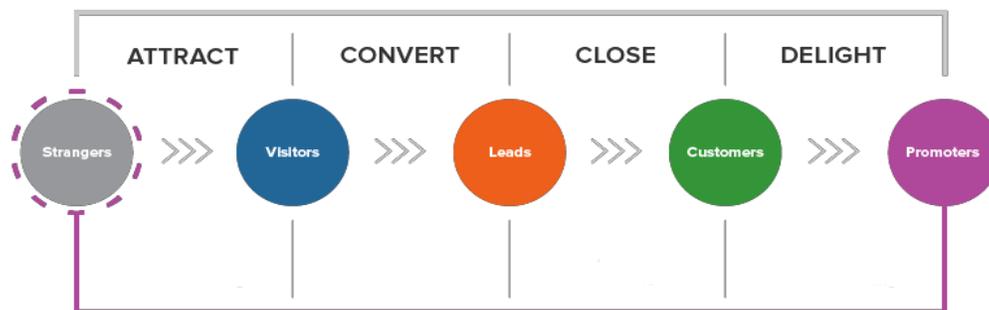
Your ROI will take a nosedive as a result.

Now, compare this scenario to a proven online marketing strategy such as Inbound Marketing.



05 What Inbound Marketing looks like

A high-level view of an Inbound Marketing Strategy looks like this – the 4 actions of the methodology are at the top:



To give you an outline of how Inbound works, let's briefly consider each action and define an important, single best practice along with a pitfall to avoid.

ATTRACT – the initial action taken is to attract strangers and convert them to visitors to your website. This is achieved using remarkable, targeted content that your audience actually wants to consume.

Do - provide content that talks about real issues that resonate with your target audience. Provide useful, educational information that adds value and makes the reader want to engage further with your content.

Don't - talk about your company, its products and services or how great you are. That's of no interest to strangers who are at this first stage of the Inbound process. It also makes your content difficult to find online (nobody searches for your company's greatest hits).

CONVERT – in this action step the objective is to convert visitors to leads by capturing relevant information (name, email address, areas of interest etc.) and adding them to a database.

Do – place well thought out calls to action in your content that naturally encourage visitors to take the next step based on the outstanding value of your information.

Don't – try to sell anything at this stage, you haven't earned the right to do so yet.

CLOSE - this is the stage of the Inbound Methodology designed to convert leads to customers. In larger organizations, an MQL (Marketing Qualified Lead) would have been passed onto the Sales Department at this point, and it would be the Sales Department's responsibility to close the sale.

Do - manage leads correctly, nurture them, add value and earn the right to close the sale. Remember, 73% of B2B leads are not sales-ready. Get to know and understand your potential customer, be buyer-centric in your approach, use the same language your potential customer would use and be helpful.

Don't - use standard, inflexible sales processes that are seller-centric.

06 Delight – the missing link

In a traditional sales model, most organizations tend to treat the conversion from lead to customer as the final stage in the sales process.

Understandably, this may not always be deliberate as the pressure for more and more sales can often distract from nurturing existing customers. But, this makes little sense.



It's much easier, and more profitable, to retain and develop existing customers than to be continually searching out new prospects to feed into the sales funnel.

Existing customers present the possibility to add value and upsell them (more of the same), cross sell them (different related products and services) and more. Crucially, a good Inbound Marketing strategy makes it relatively easy to “Delight” existing customers and turn them into ambassadors for your business and brand.

DELIGHT - In the Delight action step of Inbound Marketing, the value of hard-won customers is realized and leveraged.

The goal is to continue to engage with, educate and help existing customers, thereby encouraging them to become a valuable promoter of your business.

Do - regularly interface with customers, engage through relevant, educational content and monitor their ongoing requirements.

Don't - ignore this valuable asset. They have the potential to feed your Inbound Marketing process with more leads.

07 The tools of Inbound Marketing



Each action taken in the journey from stranger to promoter employs a number of tools. Here are examples of some of the tools used:

- Blog Post
- Keywords
- Social Marketing
- Forms
- Call to Action
- Landing Pages
- CRM (Customer Relationship Management)
- Personalized Email
- Surveys
- Smart Content
- Social Monitoring

Some of the tools listed can be used at more than one stage of the Inbound Marketing process. For example, email is utilized extensively in the Close and Delight actions.

08 Conclusion

Most businesses are aware of at least some of the actions and tools used in the Inbound Marketing methodology.

Individually, these tools can be employed to good effect.

For example, a well thought out email campaign, sent to a qualified list, can yield good results.

However, using a series of random tools outside of a defined, end-to-end online marketing structure can never yield the same predictable and profitable outcome that Inbound Marketing can.

To do so is more of a “scatter gun” approach, firing in all directions in the hope that something will hit the target.

And that’s no way to run a business.

Les Blythe Digital Marketing specializes in delivering Digital Marketing & Copywriting Solutions for Tech Companies and Startups.

If you need marketers who actually understand the tech, you can get in touch by emailing les@lesblythe.com or on our website at:

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